

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF FIRE SERVICE
OFFICERS IN THE OBERLIN FIRE DEPARTMENT**

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

BY: Dennis E. Kirin, MPA
Fire Chief
Oberlin Fire Department
Oberlin, OH

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ABSTRACT

Today's fire officers face many challenges. The officer must receive adequate training to interact effectively with the public and fellow firefighters. Although on-the-job training may be enough to squeak by with, but it does not provide the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be an effective leader. No substitute can be found for proper training and instruction.

Fire service personnel have been faced with a continuous and dramatic change in the scope and complexity of services delivered to the public it protects over the last several years. With the professionalism expected from today's fire service, citizens are scrutinizing performance at emergency incidents more closely than ever before. The focus of the fire service mission has grown from a generally reactive fire suppression force to a proactive, multi-skilled, high technology, and full service discipline. Now, fire organizations recognize the need to better prepare and improve the knowledge and skill of personnel to enable them to carry out their mission.

The challenge facing the City of Oberlin is how to provide competent fire officers and leaders now and in the future. With limited funding available, what will be the optimum method to assure the development of our fire officer's abilities to provide the community's fire service in the future?

The purpose of this research project is to study and recommend a fire officer development program based on the review of current standards applicable to the position of fire officer. This study uses a descriptive research methodology. The research questions to be answered by this undertaking include:

1. Are employee career development programs of value in preparing newly promoted fire officers for their responsibilities and duties?

2. What level fire officer training has been adopted by other fire service agencies for newly promoted fire officers?
3. What are the key components of an effective fire officer development system?

The results of this research showed that most of the departments were using NFPA 1021 as a basis for their fire officers' development at the time of the survey. It also revealed that not many departments required their officers to participate in any type of continuing education after promotion. Finally, it showed that any combination of training programs that provide career development for fire officers in the recommended components of NFPA 1021 would provide the most viable knowledge base for newly promoted officers.

The recommendation corroborated by this research was to develop and implement a fire officer development program for each rank level of the fire department based on components recommended under NFPA 1021. This program would utilize a combination of a local fire officer training program and supplemental fire science courses or NFA field courses.

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INTRODUCTION

Today's fire officers face many challenges. The officer must receive adequate training to interact effectively with the public and fellow firefighters. Although on-the-job training may be enough to squeak by with, but it does not provide the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be an effective leader. No substitute can be found for proper training and instruction.

While the Oberlin Fire Department complies with State of Ohio mandates for minimal volunteer and career firefighter training, no requirements existed for the development or training of fire officers upon promotion. Minimum qualifications for promotions to the ranks of lieutenant, battalion chief, and assistant chief were based strictly on the years of experience and education. Qualifications included a minimum of two years experience in grade and possession of certain licenses and certifications. These certifications consisted of Emergency Medical Technician - Basic and Firefighter 1A. Additional credits in the promotional process were awarded for attainment of Firefighter II or Fire Safety Inspector. The result was a newly appointed fire officer who faced an unfamiliar position without the tools required to enhance the chances for professional and personal satisfaction. This led to a "trial and error" learning environment.

The purpose of this research project is to study and recommend a fire officer development program based on the review of current standards applicable to the position of fire officer. This study uses a descriptive research methodology. The research questions to be answered by this undertaking include:

1. Are employee career development programs of value in preparing newly promoted fire officers for their responsibilities and duties?

2. What level of fire officer training has been adopted by other fire service agencies for newly promoted fire officers?
3. What are the key components of an effective fire officer development system?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Oberlin is located in Lorain County in north central Ohio. The Oberlin Fire Department is a combination full-time, part-paid organization, providing fire, rescue, and support services to approximately 10,000 citizens that reside in the City and in the surrounding New Russia Township. The department is a combination of five full-time and twenty-three part-paid firefighters operating from one fire station and responding to approximately 450 calls for emergency service per year.

The department was organized as a volunteer department in 1853. Over the years the number and title designation of fire officers may have varied but the essential functions of supervision and administration on emergency and non-emergency scenes have remained a constant. Today, eight fire officers including one assistant chief, two battalion chiefs, and five lieutenants staff the department. Six of these officers occupy part-time positions. For many years, the Civil Service Commission has been charged with setting the standards for promotional eligibility and inevitably testing to fill the position. These standards have varied and were based on the recommendations of the fire chief and the city manager. Never in the history of the department has any type of systematic approach been taken to identify the areas that would lead to a fire officer's success based on the position. History also shows that there has never been a specific training program developed to prepare candidates for the needs they would face when assuming newly promoted officer positions.

Fire service personnel have been faced with continuous and dramatic change in the scope and complexity of services delivered to the public it protects over the last several years. With the professionalism expected from today's fire service, citizens are scrutinizing performance at emergency incidents more closely than ever before. The focus of the fire service mission has grown from a generally reactive fire suppression force to a proactive, multi-skilled, high technology, and full service discipline. Now, fire organizations recognize the need to better prepare and improve the knowledge and skill of personnel to enable them to carry out their mission.

A primary objective of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP) is to advance the professional development of executive officers in the fire service. The Executive Leadership curriculum requires an applied research project be submitted by each student. This applied research project enhances the performance of executive fire officers while contributing to the fire service body of knowledge. The information reviewed in this applied research project will assist the City of Oberlin Fire Department in determining the training components necessary in its development of competent fire officers for the future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In preparation of this research project, relevant information in the form of books, magazines, and associated articles were reviewed to obtain information pertaining to career and professional development systems for fire officers. Information obtained from the literature review will enable the reader not only to identify critical factors necessary for fire officer success, but to define the components of an officer development system for the department.

The Need for Professional Development

From the literature search on the subject, there is no question that career development is identified as the crucial management tool designed to strengthen individual performance, develop employee potential, and improve organizational effectiveness. Apparently, few chief officers today question the importance or potential power of a well-designed career development process. Many, however, will admit that their current fire officer development system falls short of expectations. There are indeed many reasons for this. In the article, *Higher Education: Meeting Fire Service's Changing Needs*, Kirtley (1989), said that many community colleges and four year colleges are identified as not having the fire science or fire service administration programs in place that effectively address the specific problems of the fire service.

There are more than 1,100 associate degree programs related to the police service, compared to 314 fire service programs. At the baccalaureate degree level, there are 36 fire programs and 648 police programs. At the master's degree level, there are four fire and 130 police programs. Finally, at the doctoral level, there are 19 police programs and just one fire program. (Clark,

1993, p. 51).

Ten years later, in 1998, the educational opportunities have not changed much. A review of *Peterson's 1996 Guide to Four-Year Colleges* (Petersons, 1996) revealed that locally within the State of Ohio twenty-five colleges offer baccalaureate degree opportunities in criminal or police science while only two colleges offer education in fire science. The listing for two-year colleges (Emanski, 1996) revealed twelve colleges with associate degrees in police science and only seven with fire science degrees.

In his article, *Higher Education and Fire Service Professionalism*, Clark (1993), illustrates a correlation of higher education to professionalism when he compares the educational opportunities for both fire and police service. The police service higher educational opportunities significantly outweigh the fire service programs at all levels. Clark attributes this differential to cultural and organizational function when he says, "We have been training-oriented, from the bottom up, with an experiential/consensus knowledge base. What we need to become is education-oriented, from the top down, with a research/science knowledge base".

Almost twenty years ago, Nielson (1979) was promoting a greater degree of commitment toward higher education and professionalism in the fire service. The author directed the challenge, "We all claim that we are professionals, but what really gives the fire service this status?" Nielson noted that, "Some well-known fire service educators say that certain points must be met if a job is to qualify as a profession". The key points relating to fire officer development include: 1) a profession should rest on a body of knowledge and on developing personal skills in applying knowledge to specific cases, 2) the

career development of fire service executives must be systematic and deliberate, and 3) professional status begins with education.

The need for career planning and professional development in the fire service cannot be overemphasized or overstated. Sanders (1993) in his article, *Training is the Key to Future Success*, emphasizes this point best when he says, “Because an organization’s success depends on the knowledge, skills, and abilities of its future leaders, officer training is of paramount importance”. Clark (1993) reemphasizes this point when he says, “The benefits of college and graduate-school education’s are an innate part of what makes a profession a profession. If the fire service takes its own professionalism seriously, it should do more to promote fire science as an academic discipline”.

Farren and Kaye (1996) explored the need for career development for leaders as follows:

There are many ways and opportunities to help people develop their career. These actions can be divided into the five broad categories described below. Each category is a distinctive leadership role that corresponds to a different stage of the career development process. These roles are facilitator, appraiser, forecaster, advisor, and enabler. To engage people’s career interests as a basis for leadership, it is necessary to be proficient at all five roles. (Farren and Kaye, 1996, p. 178).

Management researchers have also examined existing fire officer development systems over the years. Cayer (1980) notes, “The history of training in the public service has not been a good one. Policy makers have long considered employee training a waste of taxpayers dollars. Training is costly, and the costs lead to controversy over whether training should be undertaken”.

While there have been many ways of promoting officers over the years, we are seeing more and more departments move to some form of organized career development programs for their employees. The program should be carefully considered so that once it is in place, it remains constant. This planned effort gives employees a clear and constant path to follow for advancement. To capably serve in the new position after advancement, training and education in the new skills, knowledge and abilities should be mastered before promotion to the next rank. (Smoke, 1997, p. 8).

The process of fire officer development is one of continual change. As more studies of the process are made, more is learned about how the development process can be changed and improved. Farren and Kaye (1996) explain:

A profession is a craft or discipline with its own history, core competencies, recognized standards of practice, and expert practitioners. Formal education or training and a protracted period of apprenticeship are usually necessary to master a profession. Unlike individual jobs, which are created and eliminated overnight, professions persist over long time spans. (Farren and Kaye, 1996, p. 183).

The need for fire officer development has been continuous. In 1989, Carter (1989) commented that during the 1970's the realization was that the fire service must develop a specialized body of knowledge, pursue college degrees, and develop criteria for progressing upward in an orderly fashion.

The legal climate of the 90's requires fire officers to be accountable for their actions and the

safety of the firefighters they lead. Only through proper training can accountability be achieved.

In increasing numbers, fire and rescue departments are placing certification requirements on the various rank levels in their organizations. This certification process ensures that personnel in any given position will have the minimum amount of knowledge needed to perform at that level.

(Armstrong, 1997, p. 10).

Brown (1987) defined thirteen fatal errors that managers make that should be avoided. One of these key errors is failing to develop personnel. He states that everyone should be given training for the next position if he or she is willing, capable, and interested.

Career Development Systems Available to the Fire Service

Over the years, numerous fire officer development programs have been developed to establish specific standards and evaluate performance for a position. The research suggests that each program has its advantages and disadvantages under various operating conditions.

Fertig (1984) noted that many departments feel that on-the-job training for fire officers is sufficient. This opinion is not isolated solely to the fire service. Amabili (1992) remarks that administrators of several municipalities and other governing bodies generally do not recognize the need for executive development for fire officers.

Daniel Gardiner (1992) believes that fire departments are finally recognizing the importance of officer development through quality education. He continues:

From the day of appointment, to the day of retirement, the fire officer must be completely in tune with what the fire department wants to accomplish. This is true from both the fire ground

operations, public relations, and everything in between. The greatest fire officer is of little effectiveness if his forces can't operate in a manner that his strategy and tactics mandate. At the same time, the newest fire officer should not sit around and wonder where he/she fits into the emergency response equation. The responsibility lies both with the fire service and with the individual officer candidates. An officer's professional and educational appetite must be satisfied. This can be done by quality in-house training or through outside sources. The important thing is that education is thorough and relevant. (Gardiner, 1992, p. 5).

The original concept of professional qualification standards, as introduced by the Joint Council of National Fire Service Organizations (JCNFSO) and the National Professional Qualifications Board (NPQB), was to develop an interrelated set of performance standards specifically for the fire service. Various levels of achievement in the standards were to build on each other to formulate a strictly defined career ladder. The committee on Fire Officer Professional Qualifications has been meeting regularly since 1973. In 1990, the responsibility for the appointment of professional qualifications committee and the development of professional qualifications standards were assumed by the long recognized leader in the development of standards, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). The intent of the 1997 Edition of the *NFPA 1021, Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*, was to develop clear and concise job performance requirements that can be used to determine whether an individual possesses the minimum skills and knowledge to perform the duties of a fire officer.

The standard specifically identifies four distinct levels of progression. Progression within the standard is based on how much responsibility is assigned to the individual and how much knowledge is

necessary to execute those duties successfully. A general prerequisite knowledge is also required for entry into each level. The four levels of progression include:

1. Fire Officer I - Supervisory Level
2. Fire Officer II - Supervisory/Managerial Level
3. Fire Officer III - Managerial/Administrative Level
4. Fire Officer IV - Administrative Level

Each progression level is then assigned various degrees of knowledge subdivided into the following eleven specific areas:

1. General
2. Human Resource Management
3. Community Awareness and Public Relations
4. Organizational Structure
5. Administration
6. Budget
7. Government Structure
8. Information Management
9. Inspection, Investigation, and Public Education
10. Emergency Service Delivery
11. Safety (1997 Ed., pp. 1021-1-1021-14)

The 1997 Edition of NFPA Standard 1021 was converted to a job performance requirement (JPR) format in order to be consistent with other standards in the Professional Qualification

Project. Because job performance requirements are written using terms specific to the job, they lend themselves well to any area where a level of performance or expertise must be established or determined. Some examples listed in the standard include:

1. Identify the authority and responsibility of each component of the fire department.
2. Prepare a pre-incident plan.
3. Justify the proposed expenditures to the appropriating governing body.
4. Develop an accident prevention program.
5. Plan, assign, coordinate activities, and establish priorities at the unit level.

However, a direct correlation between the NFPA Standard 1021 and its application to fire officer development does exist. The professional qualifications standard can be useful to both the fire officer and the employer in developing a plan and guide for an individual's growth within the organization.

In 1997, the Cuyahoga Community College's Police and Fire Training Institute and the Education Advisory Committee of the North Eastern Ohio Fire Chiefs' Association met to review the NFPA Standard 1021 and determine its applicability to fire officer development. The Advisory Committee, through its fire officer training program at Cuyahoga Community College, offers a certification track for both volunteer and career firefighters. Certification can be obtained by completing a specific course of study, passing appropriate certification examinations, and meeting certification prerequisites such as minimum experience requirements. Within the certification track is the Fire Officers' series consisting of eighteen course sections:

1. How to succeed in the new role as a company officer.

2. Differentiate between management and labor rights.
3. Fire ground and workplace health and safety issues.
4. Management principles; planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating.
5. Effective communication skills.
6. Problem solving.
7. Leadership, group influence, and team building.
8. Understanding people.
9. Maintaining discipline.
10. Counseling and evaluating personnel.
11. Teaching and organizing training sessions.
12. Legal/liability issues.
13. Building construction and fire behavior.
14. Fire ground strategy and tactics.
15. Fundamentals of fire investigation.
16. Incident Command System.
17. Pre-fire planning and inspections.
18. Safety and survival techniques (Cuyahoga Community College, 1998).

In 1997, the Ohio Fire Academy added the Officer Development Program to its curriculum.

This fire officer training was approved and implemented as a three-tiered professional development system aimed at the newly promoted company officer or a firefighter anticipating future promotion. The course identifies the minimum standards that correspond with the NFPA 1021 standard task

requirements and those components that have also been cross referenced to the NFPA 1031 and 1041 Standards. Sixteen general performance requirements are outlined with several specific task titles identified for each performance requirement. The performance requirements include:

Company Officer, Phase I

1. Public speaking
2. Instructional techniques for company officers.
3. Incident safety officer.
4. Cultural diversity and a hostile work environment.
5. On-Guard's 'Making a Difference' development program.

Company Officer, Phase II

1. Building construction.
2. Identifying hazards.
3. Incident Command System.
4. Accountability.
5. Strategy and tactics.
6. Learning to make fire ground decisions.

Company Officer, Phase III

1. Arson detection for first responders.
2. Report writing and documentation.
3. Labor relations.
4. Contract issues.

5. Essentials of customer service (Ohio Fire Academy, 1997, pp. 28-29).

International City Management Association (ICMA), as a professional and education organization, has published two outstanding books on the subject of employee development aimed at improving professional competency and strengthening the quality of supervisors in governmental agencies. In *Managing Fire Services* and *Effective Supervisory Practices*, the material is aimed at identifying the criteria to develop supervisor and managerial skills and knowledge that is applicable to career development.

In increasing frequency, fire service books and periodicals over the last twenty years have been devoted to increasing the understanding of the role of the fire officer. As a result, attention to management level skills has evolved. The International Fire Service Training Association (IFSTA) has published two outstanding manuals, *Company Officer* and *Chief Officer*, that help to identify the specific essential duties and job functions at these fire officer levels.

Summary

A review of the literature indicated that there were numerous studies performed by executive fire officers on the topic of career development. The research provided a clear understanding of the problems and expectations associated with the establishment of a fire officer development system that would be beneficial to the employee and the organization.

The information provided a historical perspective of employee career development, as well as a current perspective from the experiences of subject matter experts considering new approaches and strategies. The objective review of these perspectives allowed for the identification of the most essential

aspects when recommending the selection of a fire officer development system.

PROCEDURES

Several sources of written materials were used to gather information in this study including articles from professional periodicals and books. Information compiled in the literature review was supported by an independent survey developed by the author. This survey instrument was directed toward local fire service organizations. The survey was conducted by mailing during the period of July 15, 1998, through August 5, 1998. A mail survey was the method chosen because it facilitated contacting the largest number of respondents in the shortest amount of time.

Population

The group surveyed represented the local fire service organizations. The fire service group consisted of the following:

1. Forty-eight (48) fire departments within the Northeast Ohio area were surveyed. They represent 70 percent of the fire organizations within a tri-county area, including paid, volunteer and combination departments.
2. The survey was conducted by written instrument through the mail with completed surveys returned by mail or facsimile.

Instrumentation

An 8-part survey instrument was used to sample the responses of the Northeast Ohio fire service organizations. These questions were limited mostly to yes and no answers with some clarification allowed for certain questions. In particular, respondents were asked as to the purpose, components, and overall perceived quality of current officer development systems in the fire service. It took an

average time of less than ten minutes for the respondents to complete the survey form. A copy of the fire department survey form is included in Appendix A.

Collection of Data

Raw data was compiled for each question as indicated by the respondents. The results were tabulated and are displayed in Figure 1 through 7 and Table 1.

Assumptions and Limitations

It was assumed that all respondents would answer the survey instruments honestly, accurately, and without prejudice. Fire service participants were considered knowledgeable because they were employed in administrative positions within their respective departments.

Although the survey was directed to the chief executive officer of each fire department in the Northeast Ohio region, due to its limited size and scope, it may or may not represent all fire service organizations in the country. A relatively small sample population was surveyed due to time and resource limitations.

RESULTS

The goal of the fire department survey was to learn if similar fire service agencies were using a fire officer development program for their newly appointed officer, and to determine the content of such a program. The information obtained from the literature review was generally supported by the data gathered from the survey.

Fire Department Survey

A total of eight (8) questions were presented in the fire department survey. Several questions had Yes/No responses, while other questions required more detailed information.

Of the forty-eight surveys mailed, twenty-three (23) or 48 percent were returned, representing a wide variation of fire agencies serving populations from 1,000 to 71,000. All agencies answered Question 1. Questions 2 through 8 were answered relevant to the type of fire officer development programs offered by fire departments or used through another agency. Tabulation of the answers received to these survey questions are listed in Figures 1 through 7.

Research Question #1

Are employee career development programs of value in preparing newly promoted fire officers for their responsibilities and duties?

Responses to survey question #2 show that none of the twenty-three responding surveys from area fire departments are offering some type of formal fire officer development program.

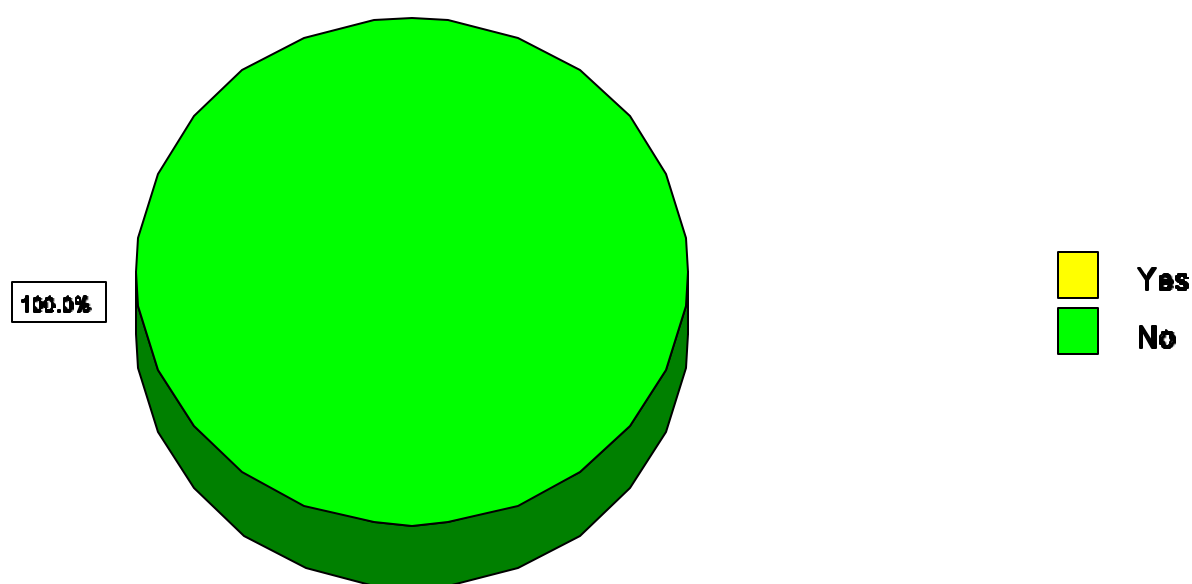


Figure 1. Does your department have a formal written development system for newly promoted fire

officers?

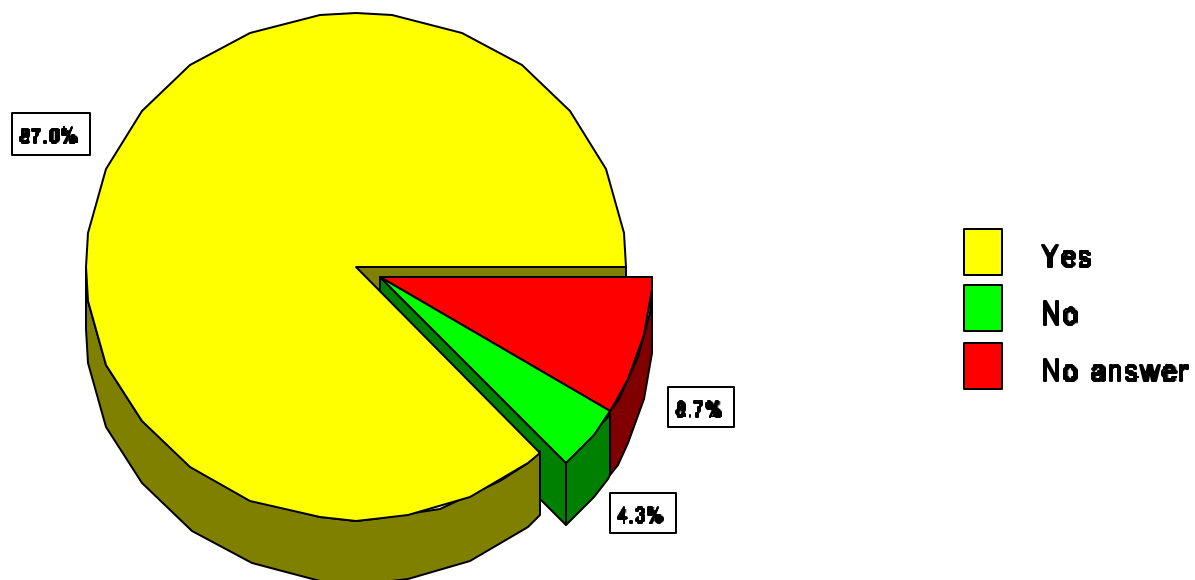


Figure 2. Is fire officer development a high priority in your organization?

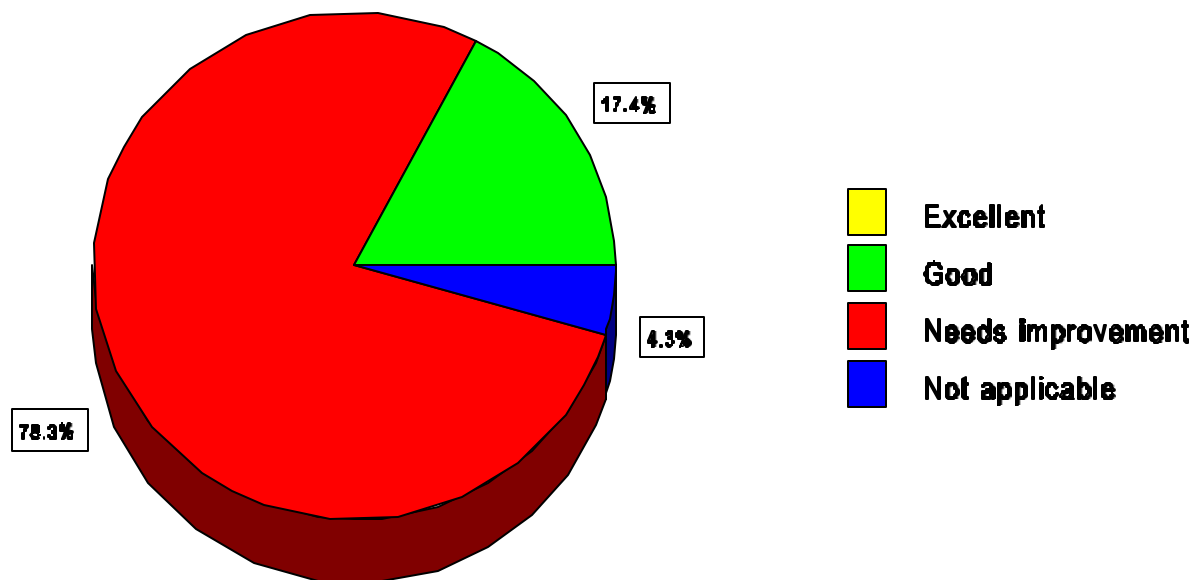


Figure 3. How would you rate the overall quality of your department's fire officer development?

The results listed in Figure 2 indicate that twenty of the respondents assert that fire officer training is a high priority in their organizations. However, eighteen respondents also note that the current means of fire officer training needs improvement.

Research Question #2

What level of post-promotional fire officer training has been adopted by other fire service agencies? The results listed in Figures 4 through 6 indicate that twenty (20) of the fire agencies responding to the survey recognize the need for some type of fire officer professional development. Figure #4 indicates that only nine (9) of the agencies require additional certifications and/or training for newly promoted fire officers. Figure #5 indicated that only thirteen (13) of the agencies conducted some form of fire officer training within their own organizations. Of the thirteen agencies that do conduct fire officer training, ten base their training programs on the NFPA 1021 standard. Figure #6 shows that at least sixteen (16) of the fire agencies required some form of continuing education for their current fire officers. This may indicate their recognition of the need for professional career development and the ever-changing fire service operations.

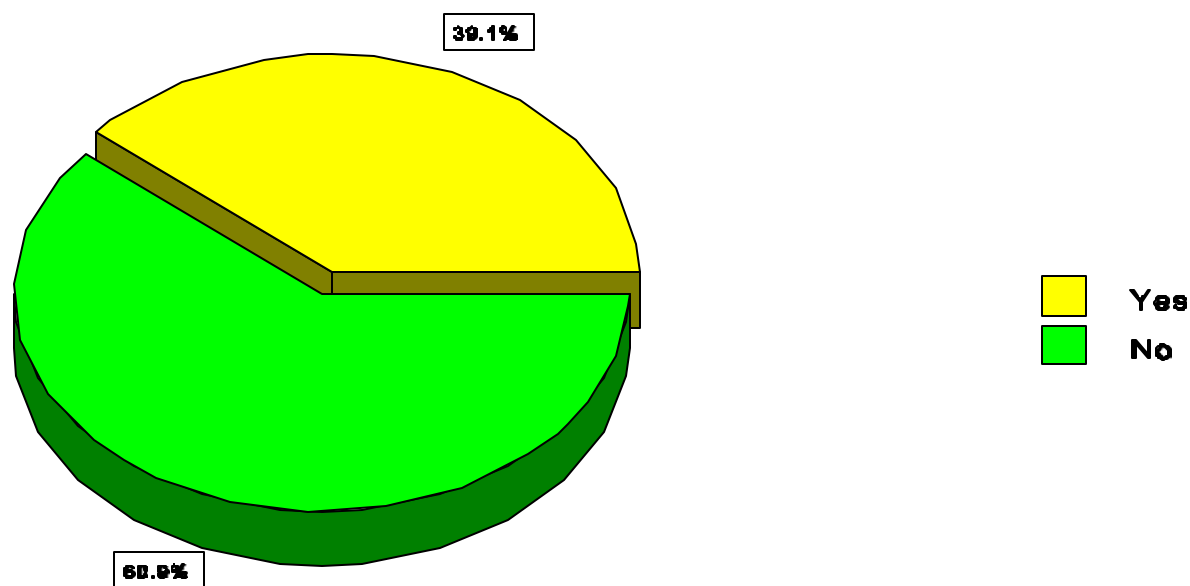


Figure 4. Does your department require any certifications and/or technical training courses to be completed after promotion of new officers?

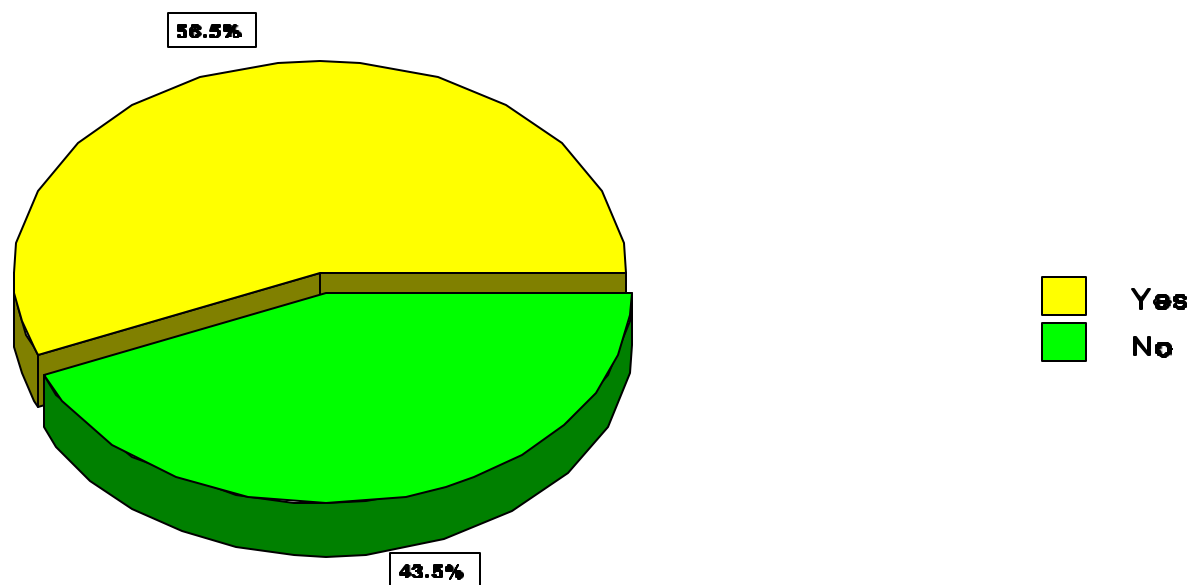


Figure 5. Does your department conduct any officer's training programs for newly promoted fire officers?

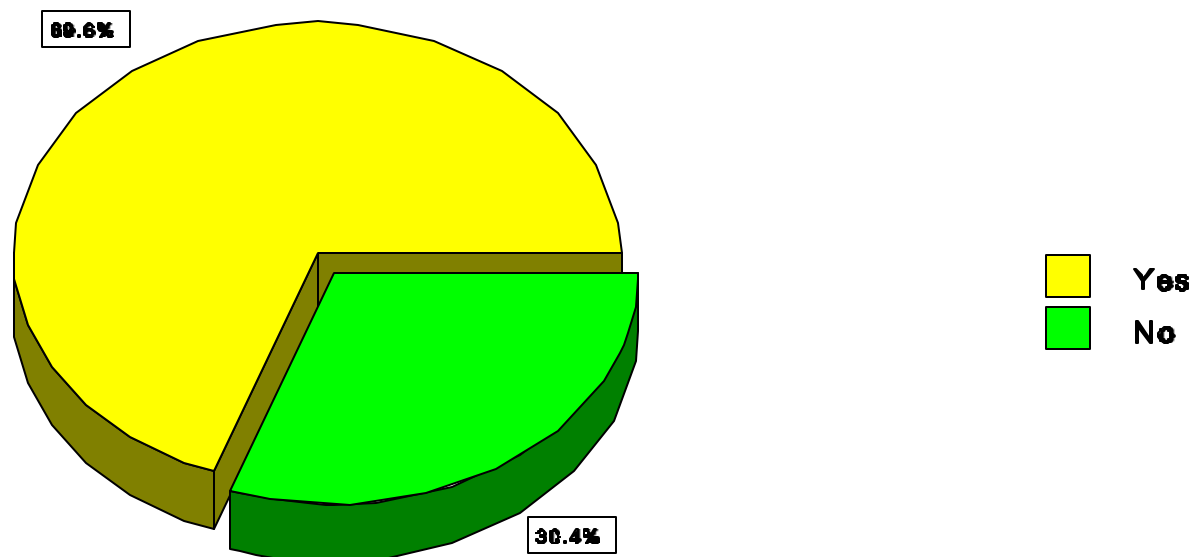


Figure 6. Does your department require ongoing training for all fire officers?

Research Question #3

What are the key components of an effective fire officer development system? Question #8 was designed to allow fire departments to identify their perception of components necessary for a fire officer development program. Respondents were asked to prioritize the twelve specific areas of

knowledge as outlined by NFPA Standard 1021 as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1. Fire officer competencies as ranked by respondents.

| Rank | Competencies |
|------|---|
| 1 | Communication skills |
| 2 | Emergency service delivery |
| 3 | Safety |
| 4 | Human resource management |
| 5 | Planning |
| 6 | Community awareness/public education |
| 7 | Organizational structure |
| 8 | Information management |
| 9 | Inspection, investigation, public education |
| 10 | Administration |
| 11 | Budget preparation |
| 12 | Government structure |

The research revealed that most fire agencies recognize common components necessary in the development of an effective fire officer program. Researchers generally agree and recognize the need for explicit criteria that describes concise job performance standards for a position such as those delineated by NFPA Standard 1021.

DISCUSSION

Determining the optimum fire officer development program for an organization is not an easy task. One must consider quantitative data, the organizational culture, program cost, and particularly the human and behavioral aspects of people before developing and implementing any system. These factors all play a significant role in the effectiveness of any potential fire officer development program recommended.

Since the 1970's with the formation of the Joint Council of National Fire Service (JCNFS), a standard professional development system to train our fire officers has been a fire service goal. The Council eventually led us to the first edition of NFPA 1021 in 1976. With its continuous updates, it has remained the fundamental basis for most existing fire officer training programs.

The results of this research project, specifically through the literature review, identified a general agreement that most fire service organizations believe that an effective fire officer development system is necessary for the success of the fire officer. The question remaining is how do we define the level of knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by a fire officer to be successful? Do these attributes vary with each department?

The literature review and our research both suggest that programs such as NFPA 1021 outline areas of expertise that a fire officer should know. Consequently, our research wanted to evaluate if fire executives agreed with the literature review and that the categories so important to fire officer training were consistent whatever the department. If we could rule out vast differences in perception, perhaps the content of a fire officer development program for the Oberlin Fire Department could be recognized.

Our research indicated from the survey that there was significant agreement on the relative importance of topics in such a program. Ten of the thirteen agencies that do conduct fire officer training base their training program on the NFPA 1021 standard. The twelve program areas delineated under NFPA Standard 1021 were ranked. The purpose of this ranking was to the agreement in perception of important categories for fire officer training and to establish a prioritized listing of topics upon which a department could probably derive an extended timetable for completion.

The top four ranked categories (see Table 1) included communication skills, emergency service delivery, safety, and human resource management. It could be argued that these four categories are necessary skills useful in any supervisory position from lieutenant through fire chief. It was also noted that while neither the Ohio Fire Academy nor the Cuyahoga Community College fire officer training programs were in full agreement with the content of the NFPA Standard 1021, they included these four topics.

The next five ranked categories included planning, community awareness, organizational structure, information management and inspection, investigation, public education programs. The most surprising category ranking was the fact that those skills deemed necessary for executive officers (administration, budget preparation, and government structure) were listed as the lowest prioritization by the chief officers who completed the survey.

No formal training for newly promoted fire officers or continuing education for other officers

covering all aspects of NFPA Standard 1021 is in place in Ohio. The lack of these essential components in the career development system is tied directly in literature to the failure of most systems. The results also revealed a marked difference in the perceptions of local fire agencies regarding the overall quality of the current system. Correcting these differences are among the many valid reasons to develop a standardized and objective fire officer development program.

The results from the literature search and the survey instrument provide clear answers to our research questions, including:

1. The literature substantiates that employee career development programs can be of significant value in preparing newly promoted fire officers for their responsibilities and duties.
2. The literature has identified several fire officer training programs that are in existence and which other fire service agencies have adopted for newly promoted fire officers.
3. Both the literature and the survey suggest that the most common components of an effective fire officer development system should be based on the NFPA Standard 1021.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is the opinion of this author that the data collected in this research project has clearly shown the need for a fire officer development program. After analysis, the NFPA core objectives were determined to be those most needed by fire officers:

Two important issues identified in this research project are the job-relatedness of any fire officer training program, and the necessity for consistency of application within the system. The standard by which the employee's performance is measured must be directly related to the essential job requirements of the position and be accurately reflected in a career development guide. State and regional fire agencies and the higher educational institutions that serve them together should aggressively study the possibility of a fire officer development program. To maintain a quality fire service for the citizens, timely response, effective service, and a fair cost, this is essential. To initiate the concept of a fire officer development program in fire agencies such as the City of Oberlin, it is recommended that the following measures be accepted and implemented. These recommendations are consistent with the

conclusions from the information and survey results within this research project.

1. Formally adopt the NFPA Standard 1021 as the core training program for the Oberlin fire officer development program.
2. Using analysis of current job descriptions, determine the level of fire officer training (according to NFPA 1021) necessary for each fire officer position in the department.
3. Since one fire officer training program covering all attributes of the NFPA Standard 1021 does not currently exist, adopt the Cuyahoga Community College training program as the core development course, and supplement this training with other course work for those attributes not covered with the CCC course.

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APPENDIX A - SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Fire Officer Development Questionnaire
National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Program

1. Type of department: ☐ Full paid ☐ Part paid ☐ Combination ☐ Volunteer
2. Does your department have a formal written development system for newly promoted fire officers? ☐ YES ☐ NO
3. Does your department require any certifications and/or technical training courses to be completed after promotion of new officers? ☐ YES ☐ NO
If yes, please describe: _____

4. Does your department conduct any officer's training programs for newly promoted fire officers? ☐ YES ☐ NO
If yes, is it based on NFPA 1021? ☐ YES ☐ NO
5. Does your department require ongoing training for all fire officers?
Type: _____ ☐ YES ☐ NO
6. Do you consider fire officer development a high priority in your organization? ☐ YES ☐ NO
7. How would you rate the overall quality of your department's fire officer development?
☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Needs improvement ☐ Not applicable
8. Based on your experience and department's need, please rank the following competencies in order of importance that you feel would equate with a fire officer's success. Use #1 as most important, and # 12 as least important.

- ___ Human resource management
- ___ Community awareness/public relations
- ___ Organizational structure
- ___ Administration
- ___ Budget preparation
- ___ Government structure
- ___ Communication skills
- ___ Information management
- ___ Planning
- ___ Inspection, investigation, public education
- ___ Emergency service delivery
- ___ Safety
- ___ Other _____
